

A black and white portrait of a young Black woman with voluminous, curly hair. She is looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. She is wearing a dark turtleneck sweater under a plaid jacket. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with trees.

# **The Comeback Kid**

***I'm going to make the  
most of this situation***

## CHECK IN FORM

TELL US YOUR STORY.

**Things were going okay until I found myself in a really bad situation.** I left the state with my daughter. We had nothing, but at least we were safe.

**Today I'm looking to the future** investing in myself through school and work. **I will bounce back** and be an even better person than before.



**Name:** LaNae

**Family:** Single mother of 6 month old daughter

**Housing:** 1 bedroom apartment, subsidized housing

**Education:** GED, pursuing Associates degree in accounting

**Job:** Part-time clerical assistant

**Interaction with public assistance:**

- **First time enrolled**
- **Active enrollment;** Escaping a bad situation and finding herself in a new state with nothing

WHAT BRINGS YOU IN TODAY?



I need immediate help to get my footing



I'm ready to start investing in myself



**I'm one step away from being independent**

Explain:

"I can only imagine where I'm going to be in the next 3 years if I got this far in the past 3 years. As long as I push, I'll get what I want."

HOW CAN WE HELP?

### MY FRUSTRATIONS

- » Issues that distract me from making progress
- » Judgement that I don't work hard enough
- » Case workers who don't meet me where I dream

### MY NEEDS & ASPIRATIONS

- » Time to pause from daily issues to set my aspirations
- » Opportunities to help me learn and grow
- » Belief that my dedication will pay off

DATE: X 7/1/18

SIGNATURE: X The Comeback Kid



# **Uncredited Caregiver**


*Why is it so hard to do the  
right thing?*

## CHECK IN FORM

### TELL US YOUR STORY.

I know several people in situations like mine – **other fathers, parents of adopted children, even grandparents.** We're all struggling with a system that doesn't recognize who we are and what we need. Instead of helping, **the system feels like it causes me more headache.**

My family's needs don't fit neatly into a category the system recognizes, but **we are a family and we need help.**



**Name:** Wayne

**Family:** Divorced father of 8 year old son and 10 year old daughter

**Housing:** Lives in brother's house with his brother's family

**Education:** GED, taking night classes to obtain Bachelor's degree in management

**Job:** Seasonal landscaper

**Interaction with public assistance:**

- **Second time enrolled**
- **Actively enrolled;** Wayne served his time for marijuana possession, but he still pays for it when employers don't hire him because of his record. With no steady job, he reapplied for benefits

### WHAT BRINGS YOU IN TODAY?



**I need immediate help to get my footing**



I'm ready to start investing in myself



I'm one step away from being independent

Explain:

"I think there needs to be an understanding of who social services systems are now serving and that it's very different than what it was 20-30 years ago."

### HOW CAN WE HELP?

#### MY FRUSTRATIONS

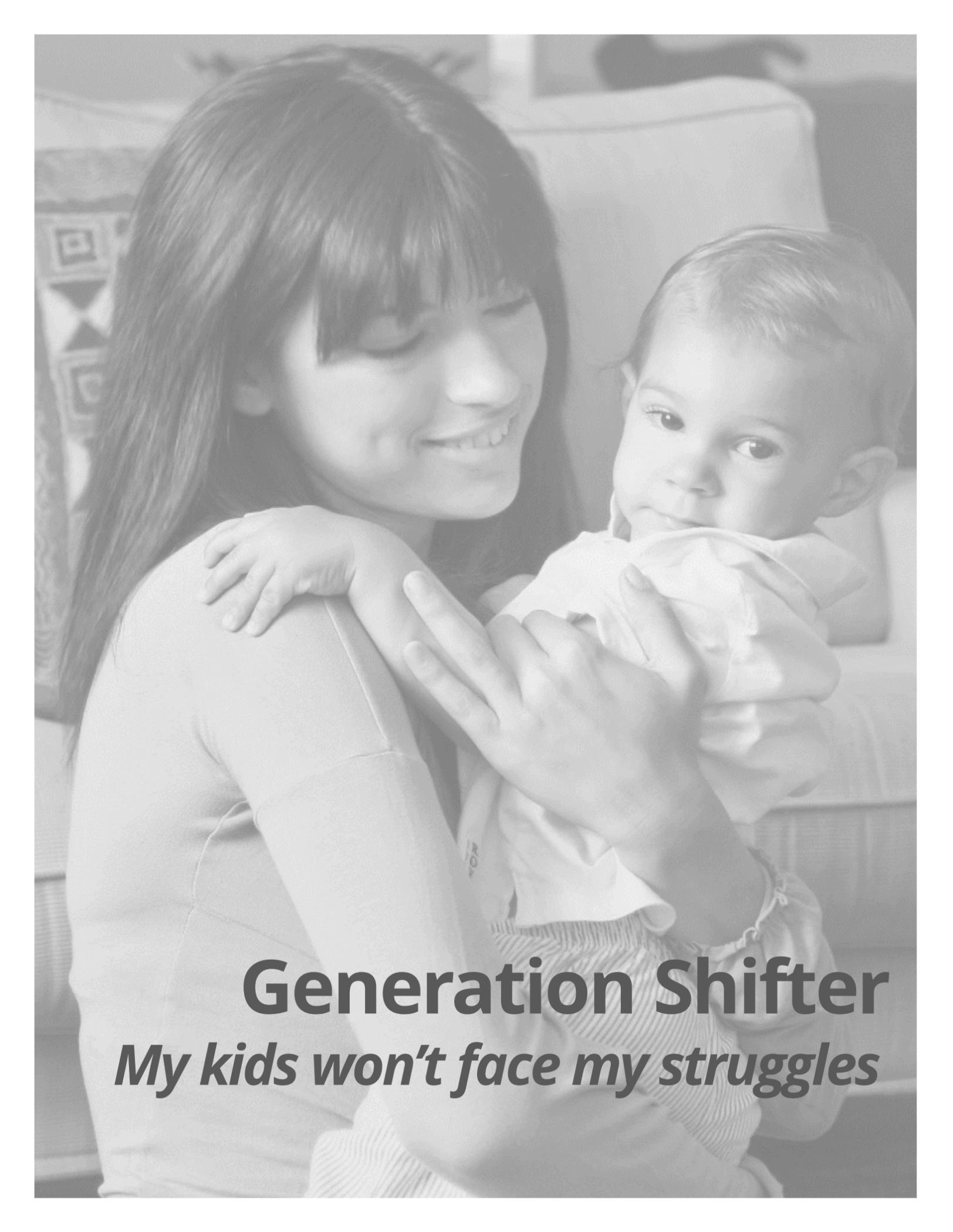
- » Justifying that my family deserves support
- » Solutions that don't meet my family's needs
- » Feeling penalized for being different

#### MY NEEDS & ASPIRATIONS

- » Customized support to meet the reality of my responsibilities
- » Agency to make choices that are right for my family
- » Feeling empowered to navigate this complex situation

DATE: X 7/1/18

SIGNATURE: X Uncredited Caregiver



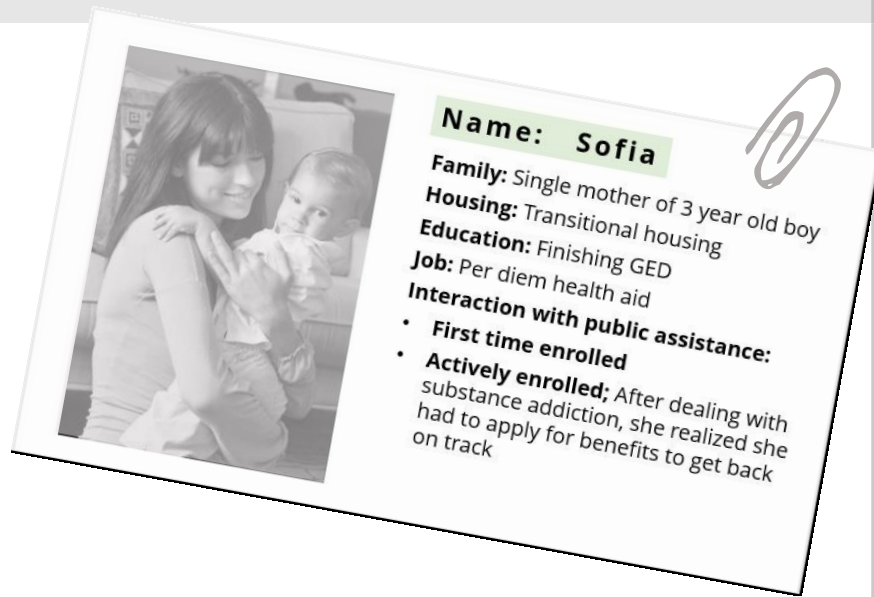
**Generation Shifter**  
*My kids won't face my struggles*

## CHECK IN FORM

TELL US YOUR STORY.

**I was raised to believe welfare is a weakness, and I do everything I can so that my kids live normal lives.** All I want is for them to achieve their dreams, even if I have to set mine aside.

I've only ever wanted to be a good mother. **My biggest challenge is finding a job that allows me to raise my children right.**



WHAT BRINGS YOU IN TODAY?



I need immediate help to get my footing



I'm ready to start investing in myself



I'm one step away from being independent

Explain:

"If I don't pay attention to him he will become a street kid. I'd rather take the sacrifice. I don't let him realize the struggle. You never know what he would do to try to help me, I could never take that chance."

HOW CAN WE HELP?

### MY FRUSTRATIONS

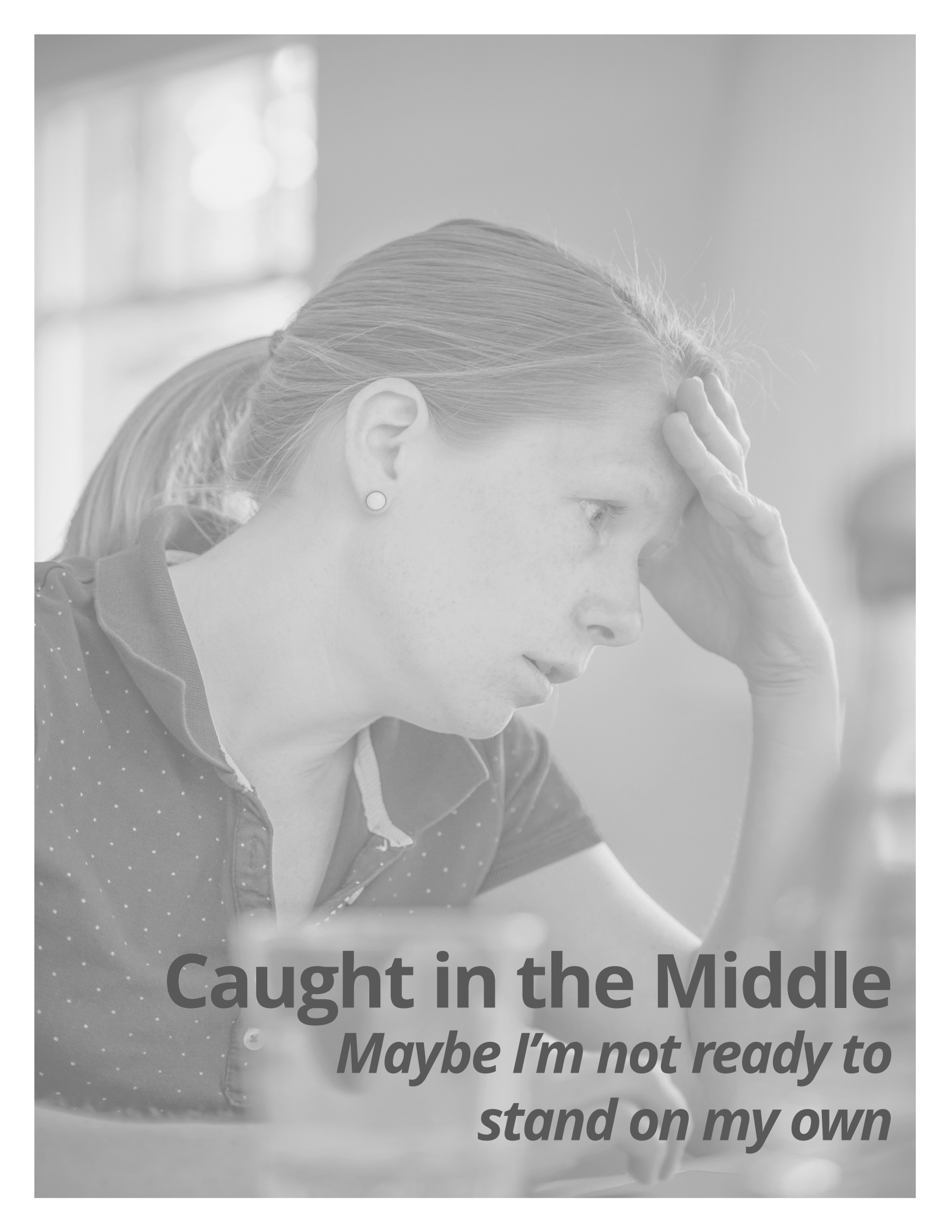
- » Missing out on time with my kids
- » Judgment that I choose time with my kids over a bigger paycheck
- » My kids feeling shame because we are on welfare

### MY NEEDS & ASPIRATIONS

- » Predictability with schedules so I can plan for my family
- » To feel like I'm protecting my kids from the stigma of welfare
- » Feeling my sacrifice will make a difference

DATE: X 7/1/18

SIGNATURE: X Generation Shifter



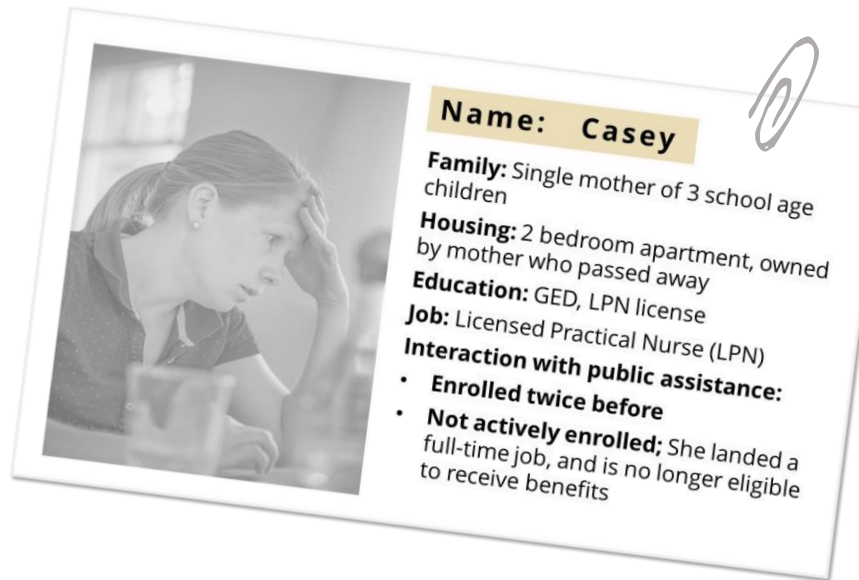
**Caught in the Middle**  
*Maybe I'm not ready to  
stand on my own*

## CHECK IN FORM

### TELL US YOUR STORY.

I was so excited to finally have a full-time job, but I **wasn't fully prepared for how a new job would change my benefits**. I knew I'd be making more money and that my benefits would change. But that much? And so suddenly?

I was **caught in the middle** between standing on my own and needing help to survive – but there was **no one to help me**.



### WHAT BRINGS YOU IN TODAY?



I need immediate help to get my footing



I'm ready to start investing in myself



I'm one step away from being independent

Explain:

"Once you get a job, you're on your own. There was no overlap when I needed support while I started working. Within 2 months I was back on my feet. All it took was about 2 months before not needing anything."

### HOW CAN WE HELP?

#### MY FRUSTRATIONS

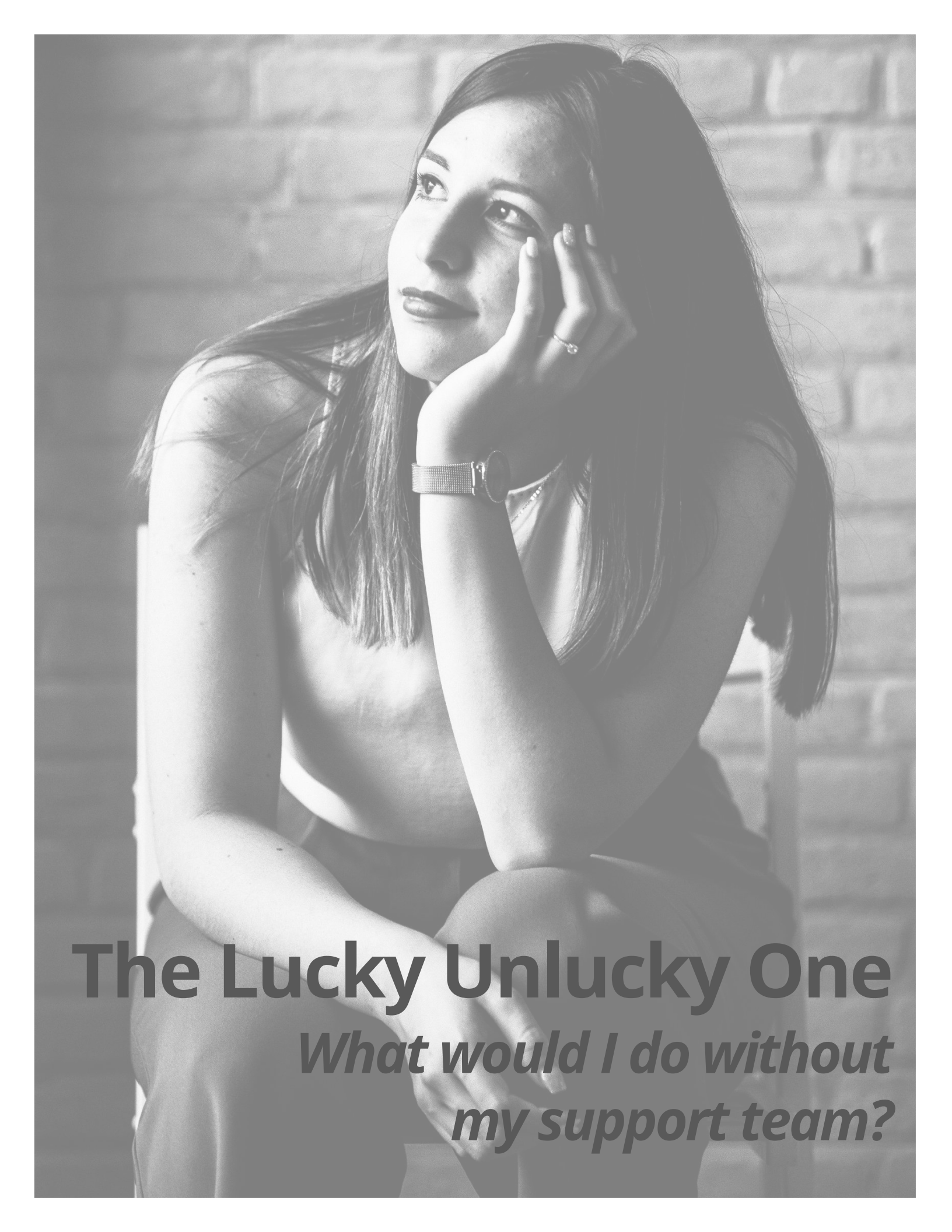
- » Feeling unprepared to face the future alone
- » Feeling abandoned by those who turned off support
- » Being treated like a case closed, when I was far from it

#### MY NEEDS & ASPIRATIONS

- » Help preparing for upcoming changes
- » Understanding that I need help even if the eligibility system says I don't
- » A buffer period to get temporary help

DATE: X 7/1/18

SIGNATURE: X Caught in the Middle



# The Lucky Unlucky One


*What would I do without  
my support team?*

## CHECK IN FORM

TELL US YOUR STORY.

I **recently survived trauma**, and though it was tough to trust people at first, I was **connected to an amazing group of people** who help me and my family with housing, counseling, food, support groups, day care, and more.

**They constantly teach me how to handle my situation**, I'm lucky to have them... they are like **my own support team**.



**Name:** Karina

**Family:** Single mother of 2 year old daughter

**Housing:** 1 bedroom apartment from Rapid Re-Housing Program

**Education:** Enrolled in EMT school

**Job:** Intern at non-profit, part-time student

**Interaction with public assistance:**

- **Enrolled as a child, First time as an adult**
- **Actively enrolled;** After experiencing domestic violence, Karina had to move into a shelter and apply for benefits

WHAT BRINGS YOU IN TODAY?



I need immediate help to get my footing



I'm ready to start investing in myself



I'm one step away from being independent

Explain:

"To have people I know I can go to and we can figure it out and get something done. It's the best feeling in the world. I'm used to being independent and not being able to count on people, so it's really refreshing."

HOW CAN WE HELP?

### MY FRUSTRATIONS

- » Feeling judged that I'm helpless and too dependent
- » Case workers who don't care about my emotional needs
- » Feeling I rely too much on others

### MY NEEDS & ASPIRATIONS

- » Addressing my situation holistically
- » A team of support that knows me and what I really need
- » Self-care and life skills to empower me

DATE: X 7/1/18

SIGNATURE: X The Lucky Unlucky One



# Stuck & Searching


*My time could be better spent*

## CHECK IN FORM

### TELL US YOUR STORY.

New to the benefits system, I **struggled to understand how to effectively get help**. No one is taking the time to explain what to do. What makes it worse is that **I'm wasting precious time** that could be used to make money for my family.

Your system is supposed to make things better, but **I feel powerless and puzzled** trying to sort out how to get the help I need.



**Name:** Tony

**Family:** Single father of 3 year old son

**Housing:** Rents a bedroom in sister's apartment

**Education:** GED, enrolled in associates program

**Job:** Part-time receptionist

**Interaction with public assistance:**

- **Enrolled as a child, First time as an adult**
- **Actively enrolled:** When Tony's family forced him to move out at the age of 21, he had to apply for benefits for the first time on his own

### WHAT BRINGS YOU IN TODAY?



**I need immediate help to get my footing**



I'm ready to start investing in myself



I'm one step away from being independent

Explain:

"I feel like I am sitting in front of social workers and I'm completely helping myself. If you're my social worker, who is supposed to guide me, then why am I here not even being guided? I felt like just a number."

### HOW CAN WE HELP?

#### MY FRUSTRATIONS

- » Expectations that I should know what to do when there is little information
- » Wasting my time on hold for hours on end
- » Feeling at the mercy of a situation with no control

#### MY NEEDS & ASPIRATIONS

- » A knowledgeable guide to steer me in the right direction
- » Immediate answers so I can get back to what's important
- » Feeling empowered with clear information

DATE: X 7/1/18

SIGNATURE: X Stuck & Searching



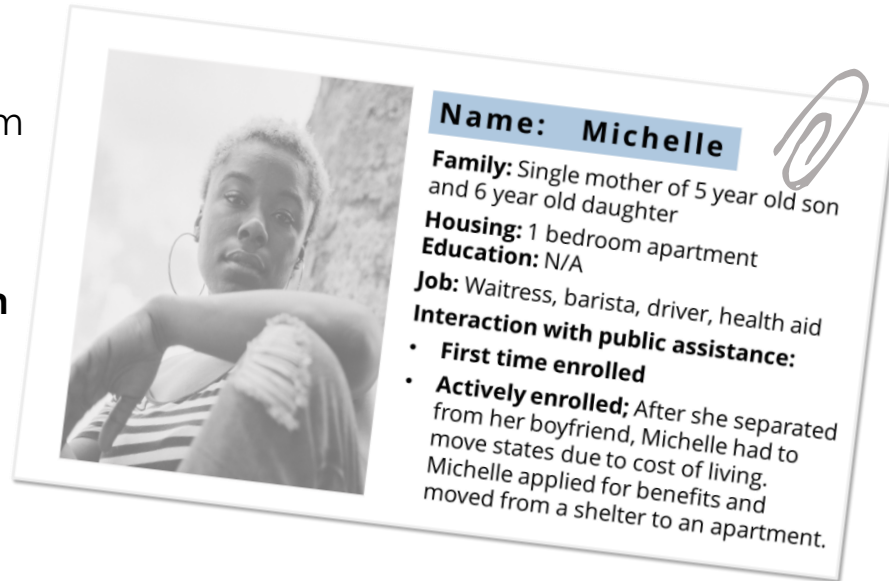
**Distressed & Defeated**  
*If I stop, I'll crash*

## CHECK IN FORM

TELL US YOUR STORY.

**I'm in over my head.** I just moved into a subsidized apartment, and I'm working day and night to keep my family there.

Life is so hectic, and I feel like **I'm on the edge**. I spend all of my time juggling no-win decisions and ruthlessly prioritizing my responsibilities. I **feel defeated and wish for a moment of relief**.



WHAT BRINGS YOU IN TODAY?



**I need immediate help to get my footing**



I'm ready to start investing in myself



I'm one step away from being independent

Explain: "I'm training to be a bus driver, host, a cleaner, and a helper at an event space. My hours are all over the place. By the time I get home, I still have to get my kids clean, and make dinner. I'm tired all the time."

HOW CAN WE HELP?

### MY FRUSTRATIONS

- » Feeling so short on time that I can't make good decisions
- » Being unable to give my kids stability
- » Feeling exhausted from calculating and prioritizing immediate needs

### MY NEEDS & ASPIRATIONS

- » A moment to get organized and tactics to help me do that
- » Peace of mind that I can cover the next few expenses
- » Flexible hours with work, school, and daycare

DATE: X 7/1/18

SIGNATURE: X Distressed & Defeated